



Eugenie Magnus Ingleton

Also Known As:

Eugenie Leonard, Mrs. Fred W. Leonard, E. M. Ingleton, E. Magnus Ingleton, Mrs. Eugenie Ingleton

Lived:

April 24, 1874 - August 3, 1936

Worked as:

adapter, director, producer, scenario editor, scenario writer, screenwriter, theatre actress

Worked In:

United States

by Jane Gaines

Although Eugenie Magnus Ingleton established her reputation as a scenario editor and writer at Universal Pictures between 1916 and 1917, before she arrived in the United States, she had several exciting careers on two continents—from Britain to South Africa.

The most complete biographical information about Ingleton is found in a 1915 *Moving Picture World* article featuring her as the reference librarian at the World Film Studio in Fort Lee, New Jersey. In this “interview,” which she may have written herself, she reveals that she was not only a nurse and newspaper correspondent during the Boer War in South Africa, but worked for the British Secret Service. In London, where she was born, she says, she began on the stage playing Little Eva in “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” at ten years old and continued, playing one hundred and four leading roles in a London stock company. Thus it was that she came to the United States to perform, first in New York then Chicago, where theatre impresario William A. Brady was one of her managers (662). It may have been through Brady that she arrived at the World Film Corporation, which Anthony Slide tells us evolved from a 1914 venture to film the successful Shubert-Brady theatrical productions as the Shubert Film Corporation (Slide 1998, 235). The idea was to promote the film versions as costing as little as ten cents as opposed to the \$2.00 a Broadway production could cost (Spehr 1977, 86). Ingleton’s early credits list the producer as either William A. Brady Picture Plays or Shubert Film Corporation, but these companies were merged in 1915.

The fact that Ingleton describes work on a scenario for a five-reel production of Irish melodrama dramatist Dion Boucicault’s 1868 “After Dark” suggests that the companies did not just film stage

play performances, but that they rewrote these productions for motion pictures. Further, in the *Motion Picture World* article, she says that her adaptation work on “After Dark” involved an updating from London to contemporary New York and from the Crimean War to the Spanish-American War (662).

From Ingleton’s description, she was working in January 1915 at the new Paragon studios, recently acquired by the World Film Corporation. Describing the library of the reference department that she started there, it is clear that she anticipates the needs of directors looking for ideas for costumes and scenes, so she collects sketches that might be used as visual reference for period films or particular locations (662). According to Slide, the studio World Film had taken over was the largest on the East Coast, and, as part of the expansion, Lewis J. Selznick had been hired as general manager and vice president in 1914, although he left in 1916 to form Lewis J. Selznick Productions, taking the company’s leading star, [Clara Kimball Young](#), with him (1998, 235). Ingleton would have overlapped with Young, who appeared in *Trilby* (1915), one of two scenarios Ingleton wrote—the other, *The Ivory Snuff Box* (1915)—directed by Maurice Tourneur. She herself left in 1916, her arrival at Universal Pictures in August announced in *Motography* (512).

At Universal, Ingleton, beginning with *Circumstantial Justice*, released September 1916, wrote around thirty features and shorts. Cooper says that Ingleton was one of a very few female department heads in the 1916–1917 time she was at Universal, and, what is more unusual, she ran the scenario department with Eugene B. Lewis. Cooper says that at that time, of the fourteen staff writers, five were women. *Motion Picture News* in December 1916 names twelve, including Lewis and Ingleton, one of whom is [Bess Meredyth](#). The article announces as well a significant change in the work of the studio writers and by implication the function of the scenario department. With a reduction in the number of “reading staff” who evaluated outside scenarios, more scripts were to be written by studio writers who would have been on payroll (4027).

In 1920, the *Ladies’ Home Journal* mentions Ingleton as one of those scenario writers who had occasionally directed, remarking that “Now and again a woman scenario editor would direct a picture.” Listing her along with [Jeanie Macpherson](#), [Ruth Ann Baldwin](#), and [Elsie Jane Wilson](#), the author refers to her as “scenario writer and afterward director” (140). This is somewhat of an exaggeration, however. Macpherson directed one film, *The Tarantula* (1915), quite by accident early in her career, and for the next decade was a screenwriter at Famous Players-Lasky, where she never directed. There is no evidence that Ingleton directed more than one five-reel feature, *The Birth of Patriotism* (1917). Cooper explains Ingleton as an “exception to the rule” that at Universal, women began directing shorts before they directed feature films, even the most accomplished and prolific feature director [Lois Weber](#). It is his theory that Ingleton was recruited to direct *The Birth of Patriotism*, a Special Attraction mounted as part of the war effort, because it was set in London, and she would have been the most knowledgeable person about British culture at the studio (142).

According to Cooper, the *Universal Weekly* says of Ingleton that she “has already shown her skill in a short picture,” by which they must mean that she wrote many (142). And further, Cooper states that the house organ refers to *The Birth of Patriotism* as “her first important photoplay,” based on a *Saturday Evening Post* story (142). He also sites the *Universal Weekly*’s enthusiastic coverage of the production of *The Woman Who Would Not Pay* (1917), a film in which a husband takes revenge on his wife and her lover by suffocating him in a safe. “Three clever women combined their work,” says the *Weekly*, citing Ingleton’s job as writer with actress [Cleo Madison](#) and director Baldwin. Ingleton would write two more films that Baldwin directed that year — *The Storm Woman* (1917) and *When Liz Lets Loose* (1917). Both of these were produced as part of the Victor Company, started by [Florence Lawrence](#) and Harry Solter in 1912 as one of the small companies within Universal integrated into the company by 1914 and phased out in 1917 (Slide 1998, 221).

In retrospect, Ingleton’s career followed the rise and fall of the “Universal Women”: at their productive high point in 1916 and gone from the company by 1917. Her next credits are for Triangle Film Corporation, which produced *Because of a Woman* (1917) and *The Answer* (1918). She adapted the George Barr McCutcheon novel as *Black Is White* (1920) for Thomas Ince. Her last credit is for the Fox Film *The Kiss Barrier* (1925), suggesting that her motion picture career was effectively over at age thirty-nine.

See also: [Ruth Ann Baldwin](#), [Florence Lawrence](#), [Jeanie Macpherson](#), [Cleo Madison](#), [Bess Meredyth](#), [Lois Weber](#), [Elsie Jane Wilson](#), [Clara Kimball Young](#).

Bibliography

“The Birth of Patriotism.” *Moving Picture Weekly* (28 April 1917): 12-13.

“Cleo Madison in ‘The Woman Who Would Not Pay.’” *Moving Picture Weekly* (21 July 1917): 11.

Condon, Mabel. “The City Universal.” *New York Dramatic Mirror* (5 Aug. 1916): 26-28, 32-36, 44.

Cooper, Mark Garrett. *Universal Women: A Case of Institutional Change*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Jessen, J. C. “In and Out of West Coast Studios.” *Motion Picture News* (23 Dec. 1916): 4027.

McMahon, Henry. “Women Directors of Plays and Pictures.” *The Ladies’ Home Journal* (Dec. 1920): 13, 140, 143-144.

“New World Film Department.” *Moving Picture World* (30 Jan. 1915): 662.

“Shifted from the Studios.” *Motography* (26 Aug. 1916): 512.

Spehr, Paul C. *The Movies Begin: Making Movies in New Jersey, 1887 – 1920*. Newark, N.J.: The Newark Museum, 1977.

Filmography

A. Archival Filmography: Extant Film Titles:

1. Eugenie Magnus Ingleton as Screenwriter

After Dark. Dir.: Fred Thomson, au.: Dion Boucicault, sc.: Eugenie Magnus Ingleton (William A. Brady Pictures Plays. US 1915) cas.: Dorothy Green, Kathryn Adams. Archive: [BFI National Archive](#) [GBB].

The Moonstone. Dir.: Frank Crane, sc.: Eugenie Magnus Ingleton (Shubert Film Corp. US 1915) cas.: Elaine Hammerstein, Ruth Findlay, si., b&w. Archive: [George Eastman Museum](#) [USR].

Somebody Lied. Dir.: Ben F. Wilson, st.: Eugenie Magnus Ingleton, sc.: Maie B. Havey (Victor Film Company US 1917) cas.: Prescilla Dean, Harry Carter, si, b&w, 8mm. Archive. Private Collection.

Below the Surface. Dir.: Irvin V. Willat, sc.: E. Magnus Ingleton (Thomas H. Ince Corp. US 1920) cas.: Grace Darmond, Archive: [Library of Congress](#) [USW], [EYE Filmmuseum](#) [NLA], [Academy Film Archive](#) [USF].

Black Is White. Dir.: Charles Giblyn, sc.: Eugenie Magnus Ingleton, George Barr McCutcheon, cost.: Lucy Duff-Gordon (Thomas H. Ince Corp. US 1920) cas.: Dorothy Dalton, Lillian Lawrence, Claire Mersereau. Archive: [Library of Congress](#) [USW], [UCLA Film and Television Archive](#) [USL].

The Dark Mirror. Dir.: Charles Giblyn, prod./sc.: Thomas H. Ince and Eugenie Magnus Ingleton (Famous Players-Lasky Corp. US 1920) cas.: Dorothy Dalton, Pedro de Cordoba, Archive: [Library of Congress](#) [USW].

His Own Law. Dir.: J. Parker Reed Jr., sc.: Eugenie Magnus Ingleton (J. Parker Reed Jr. Productions. US 1920) cas.: Jean Callhoun, Archive: [Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique](#) [BEB], [UCLA Film and Television Archive](#) [USL], [Library of Congress](#) [USW].

B. Filmography: Non-Extant Film Titles:

1. Eugenie Magnus Ingleton as Screenwriter

The Boss, 1915; *Butterfly on the Wheel*, 1915; *The Face in the Moonlight*, 1915; *The Flash of an Emerald*, 1915; *The Ivory Snuff Box*, 1915; *The Little Dutch Girl*, 1915; *Trilby*, 1915; *The Model*, 1915; *A The Almighty Dollar*, 1916; *Black Friday*, 1916; *Broken Chains*, 1916; *Cheaters*, 1916; *Circumstantial Justice*, 1916; *The Emerald Pin*, 1916; *His Mother's Boy*, 1916; *The Decoy*, 1916; *Her Wedding Day*, 1916; *McTeague*, 1916; *The Prodigal Daughter*, 1916; *The Shadow*, 1916; *The*

Woman He Feared, 1916; *Because of a Woman*, 1917; *The Birth of Patriotism*, 1917; *The Bubble of Love*, 1917; *Chubby Takes A Hand*, 1917; *Doomed*, 1917; *Eternal Love*, 1917; *The Fugitive*, 1917; *The Girl in the Checkered Coast*, 1917; *Heart Strings*, 1917; *Is Money All?*, 1917; *The Keeper of the Gate*, 1917; *The Liar of the Wolf*, 1917; *The Melody of Death*, 1917; *Money's Mockery*, 1917; *The Pulse of Life*, 1917; *The Reward of the Faithless*, 1917; *The Storm Woman*, 1917; *Twixt Love and Desire*, 1917; *When Liz Lets Loose*, 1917; *Where Glory Waits*, 1917; *The Woman Who Would Not Pay*, 1917; *Alias Mary Brown*, 1918; *The Answer*, 1918; *False Ambition*, 1918; *Her American Husband*, 1918; *The Mask*, 1918; *Mystic Faces*, 1918; *Who is to Blame?* 1918; *The Lamb and the Lion*, 1919; *The Long Lane's Turning*, 1919; *The Love Call*, 1919; *Love's Prisoner*, 1919; *The Blue Bonnet*, 1920; *Miss Nobody*, 1920, *The Secret of the Hills*, 1921, *On the High Seas*, 1922; *Alimony*, 1924; *The Kiss Barrier*, 1925; *The Scarlet Honeymoon*, 1925.

2. Eugenie Magnus Ingleton as Director

The Birth of Patriotism, 1917.

3. Eugenie Magnus Ingleton as Screenwriter and Producer

Avarice, 1917.

C. DVD Sources:

Below the Surface. DVD. (Grapevine US)

D. Streamed Media:

Below the Surface (1920) (with Dutch intertitles)

[*Somebody Lied*](#) (1917) is available on Amazon Prime (through Harpodeon)

Credit Report

Ingleton may have also produced. *Moving Picture World* credits her with writing and producing *Avarice*. *The Model* is not in standard sources, but the scenario is copyrighted at Library of Congress to a "Mrs. Ingleton." Ingleton's name is usually left off of *McTeague*, however, she is credited in *Variety* reviews of the film in 1916. Ingleton is credited on IMDb with writing *The Imposter*, 1915 and *The New South*, 1916, however, neither of these titles can be confirmed in any other source. She is often credited as E. Magnus Ingleton.

Citation

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Libraries, 2013. <<https://wfpp-test.cul.columbia.edu/pioneer/ccp-eugenie-magnus-ingleton/>>